A Sociological Analysis of Women's Participation In Workforce: With Special Reference To Medininagar (Palamu) Jharkhand

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State of the Art

An analysis of participation of women in the workforce is of crucial as it throws light on the contribution of women and their status in the social and economic framework. It is a topic intersecting with issues of economic growth, social equity, and gender equality. Despite progress in various regions, significant disparities persist in workforce participation rates, wage gaps, and access to leadership roles. According to the International Labour organisation (ILO) gender gaps in the labour market report 2023, women's overall participation in the labour market remains much lower than that of men. Among people aged 25 to 54, the gender gap in labour force participation stood at 29.2 percentage points in 2022, with female participation at 61.4 per cent and male participation at 90.6 percent. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2022, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, with women more likely to lose jobs due to their overrepresentation in sectors like hospitality, retail, and caregiving. Recovery efforts have shown mixed results, with some nations implementing targeted policies to support women's re-entry into the workforce. The emerging trend reveals that rise of remote work and digital platforms has opened new opportunities for women particularly in developing economies. Studies show that flexible work arrangements can help mitigate traditional barriers to participation such as geographic immobility and caregiving responsibilities. On one hand female entrepreneurship is on the rise supported by microfinance institutions and digital marketplaces but research increasingly show how race class and age intersect with the gender to influence workforce participation and that women from marginalised communities often face compound challenges requiring tailored policy interventions. Although significant progress has been made, gaps persist in understanding and addressing the numerous barriers and challenges in workforce participation, which can stem from cultural, social, and structural factors. Gender stereotypes and societal expectations often limit women's career choices, confining them to traditionally "feminine" roles or discouraging them from pursuing leadership positions. These hinderances create a cycle of underrepresentation and inequality for women in the workforce.

Introduction

The inclusion of women in the workforce has long been a subject of sociological inquiry, particularly within feminist theory and gender studies Martineau, Harriet (1859),Female

Industry, The Edinburgh Review,109, https://search.app/7ei1TPj56LXxfHof6. Over the past century, the role of women in labour markets has undergone profound transformations, challenged traditional gender norms and reshaped economic and social structures worldwide. Sociological approaches to women and work explore the ways gender, social structures, and cultural norms shape women's experiences in the workforce. Some notable works are Ann Oakley (1974) 'The Sociology of Housework', A.R Hochschild (1989) 'The Second Shift', Sylvia Walby (1990),'Theorizing Patriarchy'. Women's participation in workforce is influenced by various factors like cultural norms, societal- expectations (gender role), policy support, overall social structure. A sociological analysis of intersections of gender role, work aspects and social conditioning will allow us to analyse the deep-rooted patriarchal mindset of the society, inequality and discrimination, levels of education, skills, training, familial expectations from women affect the extent of participation and advancement of women in the labour force. The domain of this study is Medini Nagar. It is a city and municipal corporation in the district of Palamu in Jharkhand. Although a very limited primary data is available but it can be observed that it is a place with diverse economic activities like shopkeeping, tailoring, catering and food outlets, farming, raising livestock, providing labour and construction activities. Most of the women in this area perform household chores, rear children, work in tobacco packing factories, assist their husbands in farm and nonfarm activities. Some of the literate and educated women are also involved in professions like teaching, nursing, receptionists etc. Others provide services like domestic helps, midwifery, child minders etc. According to census, 2001 on 'Working Population of Medini-Nagar' 23,072 were engaged in work activities. 80.1% of workers describe their work as Main Work (Employment or Earning more than 6 Months) while 19.9% were involved in Marginal activity providing livelihood for less than 6 months. Of 23,072 workers engaged in Main Work, 174 were cultivators (owner or co-owner) while 216 were agricultural labour. Non- working male population was 22,260 whereas non-working female population was 33,064, which shows a huge gap between male and female labour force participation rate. This research intends to study the participation of women in both Formal and Informal sector of domestic economy of Medini-Nagar, look into and analyse the social-economic, structural, institutional and cultural factors that have allowed or restricted the working of women and appreciate and understand the current status of women in the workforce.

Literature Review

The classical Sociologists throw some light on society and work for instance Durkheim wrote on The Division of Labour in Society (1893), described division of labour as an integrating force in the society creating organic solidarity. Max Weber in his seminal work The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904) discussed that the beliefs of certain Protestant denominations, particularly Calvinism, with its emphasis on predestination and a strong work ethic, inadvertently fostered the rise of modern Capitalism. Talcott Parsons in The Social Structure of the Family (1959) believed that family has a clear division of labour between men and women. He argued that women should take on expressive roles, such as caring for children and managing the household, while men should take on instrumental roles, such as working outside the home to provide financial support. Fredrick Engels in his The Origin of the Family, Private Property (1884) explains how the patriarchal family and private property led to the oppression of women. It argues that the oppression of women and the state are not eternal, but will end when private property is overthrown. Although while discussing the notions of work and society, most classical sociologists did not pay much attention towards the inclusion of women in the sociological analysis of various aspects of productive and recognised work in the society. It was only with the rise of feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s that women studies gained significant traction within Sociological study. Some of the study which later studied women and work aspects in the society are:

Ester Boserup (1970) was the first to conduct a study on Women's role in economic development investigated into what happens to women in the process of economic and social growth throughout the developing world, thereby serving as an international benchmark. It presents a systematic evaluation of the gender-differentiated effects of the structural transformation associated with modernization in agriculture and industry. The researcher elaborates the key issue of how the role of women in economic development has or has not changed over the past four decades in developing countries, and highlights crucial issues concerning women includes: women and inequality, international and national migration, conflict, HIV and AIDS, markets and employment, urbanization, leadership, property rights, global processes, including the Millennium Development Goals, and barriers to change. Further the research motivated also examined policy strategies that developing country governments pursued, from the inward-looking strategies

designed to promote the fledging industries of newly independent nations, to the more outward-oriented strategies based on market-oriented reforms. Lastly the researcher pointed to adverse outcomes for women in their labour market and social status.

Bina Agrawal (1994) conducted a study A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia wherein the researcher explores the intersection of gender, land ownership, and economic independence in South Asia, analysed how land rights, or the lack thereof, profoundly impact women's social status, economic security, and empowerment in patriarchal societies and argued that despite the significant role women play in agriculture, they are systematically excluded from owning and controlling land. Further, the researcher highlights the critical need for women's access to and control over land as a means of achieving gender equality, improving livelihoods, and reducing poverty also critiqued existing policies, advocated for reforms in inheritance laws, land distribution programs, and collective farming initiatives to ensure equitable access for women, lastly the researcher inculcated the argument of increasing bargaining power of women at household community and at the state level for empowerment of women and claimed that despite the legislation favouring land rights to women very few have effective land control.

Pranav Kumar Arya (2009) conducted a study on A Sociological study of participation of tribal women of Jharkhand in the development programme. The researcher gives abroad meaning of development analysing the importance of involving both men and women for political and economic development. The researcher focuses on the issues of the tribal population by stating that the development of the tribal population in India has been a major concern of the government, voluntary agencies, NGOs, social reformers, social scientists etc. But even after five decades we are no nearer to the solution of the problem. Rather, things appear to be more muddled than before. Schemes after schemes have been conceived and implemented. Most of them have failed. In most cases the tribal life has worsened. What went wrong? Where did it go wrong? Is our definition of development at fault? Our perception of the problem is erroneous? The programmes we have conceived and implemented are at variance with the target we have set? Do we have a target at all? The researcher questions into the belief that all these have contributed their mite to the muddle. We are unable to find a single statement as regards the strategy of tribal development in India. No policy paper exists on this important subject, though millions of rupees have already been spent in the name of tribal development.

Daniel Stockemer et.al (2011) conducted a study on Women's representation around the world: The importance of women's participation in the work force to understand how women entering the workforce has contributed to the representation of women in elected parliaments. Keeping other aspects like a country's electoral system type, quota provisions, development, corruption, regime type, the religiosity of the country, as well as region constant, they found that, across time and space, the number of women entering the labour force positively impacts their political representation. To buttress the argument, the researcher adopts the following structure: in the upcoming second part of the article, they review the current literature on women in politics in light of the possible positive link between women in the labour force and women's representation. In the third section they present the control variables and their operationalisation. The fourth section focuses on the statistical procedures that they employ for this study. In the penultimate part, they discuss the results, which demonstrate that there is a strong positive impact between more women in the workforce and higher levels of women's representation. The researchers have used the literature of British feminist Mary Wollstone-craft argued in "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" that women should have the same fundamental rights as men. More focusing on political rights, J.S. Mill "The Subjection of Women" (1869) nearly 80 years later that until women were given the right to vote, they would not become active citizens. In the post-World War II era this reasoning was extended to political representation. Finally, they present a summary of the main arguments of this paper and highlight some avenues for further research.

Anita Karn (2012) conducted a study on Level of Literacy and Participation of Women in the Workforce in Darbhanga District. The researcher presents the data regarding the minimal and dismal participation of women in the work especially in Bihar and believes that there should be some measures to be adopted to reduce the gulf between work forces of males and females. considering these facts researcher makes an in-depth study of the spatial variations in the participation rate of females in the work-force. The researcher intends that more research is needed, but two explanations are plausible One, young females are shifting from employment to higher education. Two, as incomes and female education improve, families pull females out of the work force for status reasons. The working age is defined as 15-60 years, but as demand for higher education rises, the proportion of students aged 15-25 rises. This aids skill creation, but reduces worker participation, and so offsets the demographic dividend created by falling fertility. Research

highlights other reasons for female withdrawal and discusses the importance of reducing gender discrimination and improved working conditions for women.

Naila Kabeer et.al (2013) conducted a study on Organising Women Workers in the Informal Economy: Beyond the Weapons of the Weak explores the emergence of women working in the growing informal sectors of the global south. The researchers have tried to find out what gives the women the impetus and courage to organise even in a structurally disadvantaged setting within the economy, the barriers the women face and the battery of weapons among these working women, which serve them better and is more transformative.

Salime Mehtap et al. (2016) conducted a study on Factors Affecting Women's Participation in the Jordanian workforce to compile a profile of the non-working Jordanian female and gauge their perceptions of certain socio-economic factors that affect female participation in the labour force. The study also attempts to measure their degree of satisfaction with staying at home. The researchers found that out of the 145 non-working women surveyed, the majority were married with children, a university graduate without any work experience and with a household income of over 1,000 JOD. In general these women acknowledged that there were socio- economic factors deterring them from engaging in the work force and if they were to work it would be for reasons of self-actualization and preferably within the public sector. Except for education level and family income there were no significant differences in perceptions with respect to certain demographic factors. Respondents believe that gender stereotypes should not be an obstacle to working and are against men being given preferential treatment for positions. The research highlights that sometimes their perceptions did not reflect actual reality and many respondents were not really aware of women friendly labour laws. Finally, the researchers found that majority of women were not satisfied with staying at home.

P Neetha (2017) conducted a study on Women and Work explaining various aspects of women and work in the society. Firstly, the researcher highlights exclusion of women's work in mainstream definitions as most of the work that women perform is not acknowledged as work within the popular idea of the term because in the mainstream definition, these activities are done 'at leisure' and there is no monetary transaction involved. Such conceptualisations lead to a narrow definition of the work force which excludes many women thus, devaluing of women's work is woven into

the very fabric of contemporary economic theory and practice. Secondly the researcher talks about the differences between productive and unproductive work, elaborated on the contradiction between work and employment pointed out by feminist economists. Thirdly, the researcher talks about unpaid work which is performed by women, emphasized the uneven distribution of unpaid work amongst women irrespective of their class categorizations. Further, the researcher extensively discusses the theoretical framework concerning women and work and lastly the researcher elaborated on women and work in India and the recent developments in this regard. The researcher concludes that women's role as economic agents in the labour market and the reproductive role in the household can't be undervalued and the discrimination against women in the labour market in terms of participation, occupational segregation and differential wages are still looming large as issues yet to receive attention in wider analysis and policies.

Nibedita Chowdhury (2023) conducted a study on A critical study of women's participation in agriculture workforce: With special reference to the East Karbi Anglong District of Assam. The researcher states that an empowered woman is an actual change maker in her family society and community also believes that history shows that the role of women in society has a significant impact on a nation's stability advancement and long-term development. The Researcher states that only one percent of world's property is owned by women Although women are joining the labour market in increasing numbers, there is no discernible improvement in women's quality of life. Inequalities in the workplace have not decreased as the percentage of women in the labour force has increased. There is a consensus that women's work is undervalued in almost all locations and works. Women are discriminated against a lot especially in underdeveloped and developing countries and India is no exception to that. Taking into account married, single, and a pooled sample of all selected household women, the researcher concentrates on the workforce involvement of women in this dissertation. The researcher would investigate the variables influencing women's workforce participation in agriculture in the rural parts of East Karbi Anglong district of Assam during 2021-22.

Statement of The Problem

A Sociological analysis of Women's Participation in Workforce: With Special reference to Medininagar, Palamu .The participation of women in the workforce is significant for any country

to develop holistically and inclusively because women can contribute in enhancing the productivity of the economy. Analysing and studying this aspect is essential to achieve inclusive growth, reduce poverty, and empower women to play a more significant role in the socio-economic development of Medininagar, Palamu, Jharkhand.

Research Objectives

1. To study the participation of women both in Formal and Informal sector of the economy of Medininagar, Palamu.
2. To explore the cumulative influence of social- economic cultural, structural and institutional factors that shape women's entry and exit in the labour force in Medininagar Palamu.
3. To understand and analyse the current Socio-Economic status of women in the workforce in Medininagar, Palamu.

Hypothesis

1. Participation of women in the informal sector of the economy is more than that in the formal sector in Medininagar, Palamu.
2. The cumulative impact of socio-economic, cultural structural and institutional factors on women's participation in workforce in Medininagar, Palamu has been largely negative and restraining.
3. There has been a significant change in the status of women in Medininagar, Palamu.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's participation in the workforce. The design is exploratory and tentative, aiming to analyse patterns, factors, and consequences associated with women's employment.

Data Collection

Primary Data:

Interview Schedule to collect employment status, working conditions, barriers, and perceptions and to gather in-depth narratives from women workers of Sample Size 150 using snowball sampling technique. 30 Stakeholders belonging to of NGOs, People in the administration, employers, and policymakers

Observation:

Non-Participant Observation: To provide an objective view of a research setting without actively participating in the activities being studied

Secondary Data:

Census, government reports and reports of international organisations, academic articles will be analysed to complement primary data and understand broader trends.

Ethical Considerations:
Informed Consent: Participants will be informed about the study's purpose, ensuring voluntary participation. Confidentiality: Data privacy and anonymity will be maintained.

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the sociological analysis of women's participation in the workforce in Medini Nagar, located in the district of Palamu, Jharkhand, India. It is characterized by diverse socio-economic and cultural dynamics. This location represents a mix of rural and urban features, making it suitable for examining the transitional aspects of workforce participation among women. The study will cover women from various socio-economic, caste, and religious backgrounds, ranging from rural to semi-urban settings. It will examine data across age groups, educational levels, and marital statuses to provide a comprehensive picture of workforce participation. The research will primarily focus on recent complexities (past 20-30years) to capture changes in workforce participation. Limitations may include access to reliable data, cultural biases in self-reported experiences, and time constraints.

Significance of the study

The sociological analysis of women's participation in the workforce is significant as it sheds light on the evolving roles, opportunities, and challenges faced by women in modern societies. This study is crucial for several reasons:

Understand broader Social Structure:

Which provide insights of social construct called gender, disparities in the nature of employment of women, influenced by socio-cultural norms, family, societal attitude and expectations.

Promoting Gender Equity:

The study highlights the need for policies that promote equal opportunities for women, contributing to gender equity in both economic and social spheres. It can also encourage governments and organizations to implement affirmative actions and inclusive practices.

Economic Development:

Women's participation in the workforce plays a critical role in economic growth, upliftment of socially, economically unskilled and uneducated women across the social spectrum. Analysing the issues like employment of women mostly in informal sector, less riskier jobs, can emphasize the urgent need to bring social, economic, structural and institutional reform and strategies to harness their potential so as to pave the way for inclusive development.

Cultural and Social Transformation:

The study explores how cultural norms, traditional roles, and societal expectations influence women's work participation. It also examines shifts in attitudes toward gender roles and how these shifts impact broader social dynamics.

Policy Formulation:

By identifying obstacles such as discrimination, lack of childcare support, housewifisation of women, and work-life balance issues, the study can guide policymakers in designing interventions to create a more inclusive work environment.

Empowerment and Representation:

The research highlights the importance of women's empowerment through employment and its impact on decision-making power within families and communities. It also examines representation in leadership positions, contributing to advocacy for equal representation.

Diversity and Inclusion:

The findings can help organizations and institutions develop strategies to foster diversity and inclusion, ensuring that women are not only present in the workforce but are also able to thrive.

Sociological Theory and Practice:

The study enriches sociological theories on gender, labour, and social stratification by providing empirical data and interpretations of women's roles in the labour market.

Conclusion: The study will help to identify the challenges women face and the opportunities available for enhancing their participation in the workforce. The findings of this research will provide a deeper understanding of gender inequality, social, structural, cultural barriers to inclusive workforce, and strategies for fostering gender equity.

Tentative Chapterisation

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Chapter-5: Factors Influencing Women's Workforce Participation
Chapter-6: Current Socio-economic status of Women in the Workforce
Chapter-7: Data Analysis and Interpretation
Chapter-8: Conclusions and Recommendations

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